

A Unit within a Unit: Caring for Patients with Chemical Dependencies on a Medical Unit



BRIGHAM AND WOMEN'S
Faulkner Hospital

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Purpose

- The purpose was to develop an Addiction Recovery Program (ARP) care area to support individuals with complex medical diagnoses while maintaining the therapeutic interventions necessary for the ARP client.

Background

- The original inpatient ARP area was an isolated 14 bed unit that lacked advanced physiologic monitoring capabilities.
- Increasing patient acuity and co-morbidities displayed by the ARP population could no longer be safely managed in a stand alone unit.
- The increasing patient acuity led to a decision to integrate the dedicated ARP unit into an established medical unit.

Challenge

- The challenge was to ensure that medical nurses had the skills needed to provide physiologic and psychological care to the ARP patient population and their families.

Process Time Line:

January - April, 2013

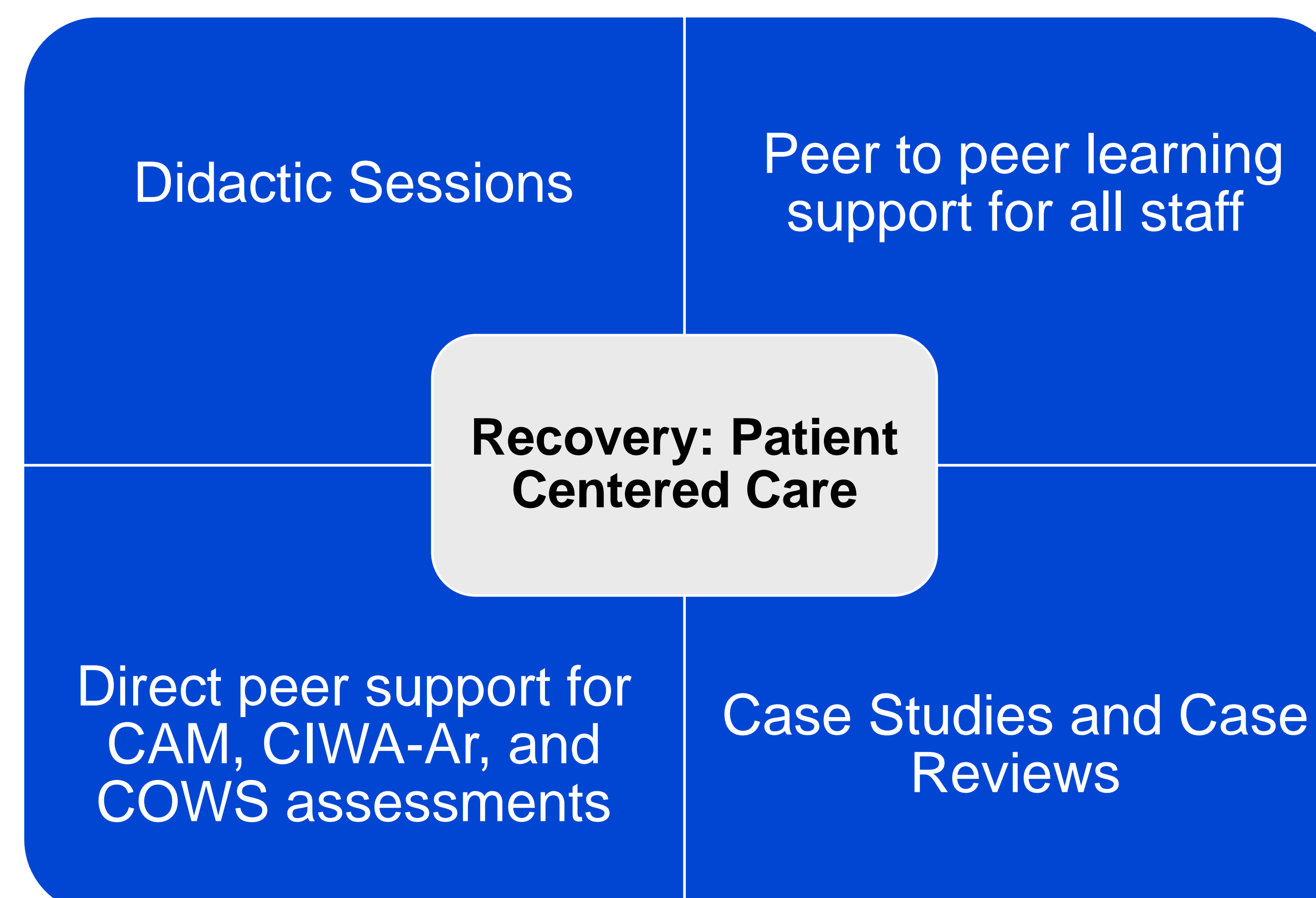
- Identified 6 North as the physical relocation for the ARP unit
- Developed a comprehensive educational plan for all staff
- Educated 6 North nurses and support staff to care for ARP patients in a well established medical unit

April – June, 2013

- Completed education for all staff
- Transitioned ARP patients to the existing inpatient medical/telemetry unit, that offered 24 hour on-site medical coverage
- Provided nursing expertise supported by:
 - telemetry
 - continuous oxygen saturation monitoring
 - advanced pharmacology to enhance management of withdrawal
- Integrated addiction care and medical co-morbidity management
- Improved addiction care to all hospitalized patients through specialty consultation

June, 2013 - Present

- Develop quarterly 2 day ARP educational programs for all members of the health care team
- Establish monthly ARP team meetings to evaluate the program, recommend changes, and assure continuous quality improvement



Outcomes/Findings

- The treatment of substance abuse within a medical unit can provide a holistic and inclusive plan of care that emphasizes addiction as a chronic treatable illness.

Advancing the Practice

- The ARP educational program continues to provide comprehensive learning opportunities to all staff within Brigham and Women's Faulkner Hospital (BWFH)
- The success of the ARP program at BWFH allows us to:
 - fully support patient and family centered care.
 - provide educational opportunities beyond BWFH.
 - share this success through professional programs at local, regional, and national levels.